

Amendments to the Specification

Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 10, with the following paragraph:

A1
In the first step of the process of the present invention, the selected starting material is melted. If, by way of example, sorbitol is the starting material, it is heated to at least about 100°C, or a least to its melting point. For anhydrosugar alcohols generally this temperature is from about 100°C to about 191°. For sorbitol powder, to provide a specific example, the preferred melting temperature is from about 98° C to about 100° C. Once molten, the sorbitol is subject to stirring.

Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 21, with the following paragraph:

A2
Following the dehydration procedure, the resultant mixture is purified. In a preferred embodiment, vacuum distillation is used, although alternatives such as filtration, or the addition of activated charcoal with subsequent crystallization, are available. As noted above, the parameters for vacuum distillation will vary depending upon the material to be purified, and the temperature and pressure, as will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art. The pot temperature will of course depend upon the temperature at which the material to be purified distills (the distillation point), which again will depend on the vacuum applied in the system. For example, in the case of isosorbide, a range of vapor temperatures of from about 155°C to about 170°C is preferred; more preferred is from about 160°C to about 170°C; even more preferred is from about 165°C to about 170°C. The vacuum pressure can

A12
be from about 0.5 Torr to about 40 Torr; preferably from about 1 Torr to about 10 Torr. For example, and specifically with regard to vacuum distillation of isosorbide, a vacuum pressure of from about 1 Torr to about 10 Torr, a pot temperature of about 180°C and a vapor temperature of from about 160- \pm 2°C to about 170°C are currently most preferred.

A12 cont
Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 2, with the following paragraph:

A3
The same apparatus and the same operational conditions-except those specified below-as in Example 1 were used. Upon heating sorbitol to \sim about 100°C to a molten state, an acidic ion exchange resin, Amberlyst 15 (Rohm and Haas, 24.2g), was added and vacuumed applied (5-7 Torr). Heating was increased to 135°C and the reaction allowed to stir continuously for \sim about 2h. The resulting mixture contained 64.5% isosorbide and was then purified by the procedure described in Example 1.

A4
Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 10, with the following paragraph:

A4
The same apparatus and the same operational conditions-except those specified below-as in Example 1 were used. Upon heating sorbitol to \sim about 100°C to a molten state, an acidic ion exchange resin, Dowex 50WX4, (18.1g), was added and vacuumed applied (7-9 Torr). Heating was increased to 135°C and the reaction allowed to stir continuously for \sim about 2h. The resulting mixture contained 64.1% isosorbide. Purification was then performed.

Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 18, with the following
paragraph:

AS
The same apparatus and the same operational conditions-except those specified below-as in Example 1 were used. Upon heating sorbitol to \sim about 100°C to a molten state, an acidic ion exchange resin, Amberlyst 35 (Rohm and Haas, 11.7g), was added and vacuumed applied (9-12 Torr). Heating was increased to 135°C and the reaction allowed to stir continuously for \sim about 2h. The resulting mixture contained 18.6% sorbitan and 73.4% isosorbide. The mixture was then purified using the above described procedure.

Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 5, with the following
paragraph:

AB
The same apparatus and the same operational conditions-except those specified below-as in Example 1 were used. Upon heating sorbitol to \sim about 100°C to a molten state, an acidic ion exchange resin, RCP21H (Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation, 12.9g), was added and vacuumed applied (7-9 Torr). Heating was increased to 135°C and the reaction allowed to stir continuously under vacuum for \sim about 5h. The resulting mixture contained 68.9% isosorbide. The mixture was then purified using the above described procedure.

Please substitute the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 14, with the following
paragraph:

The same apparatus and the same operational conditions-except those specified

A7 below-as in Example 1 were used. Sorbitol (221.4g, 0.99 mol) was heated to \sim about 100°C to a molten state. At this time, a sulfated zirconia pellet (#416/03 Japan Energy Corporation, 57.7g), was added and vacuumed applied (5-7 Torr). Heating was increased to 150°C and the reaction allowed to stir continuously for \sim about 7h. The resulting mixture contained 2.2% sorbitol, 56.0% sorbitan, and 22.9% isosorbide.